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FEDERAL BUREAU

of

INVESTIGATION

File No. 100
Sub. 1823-47

See also Nos. _____

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: May 17, 1946

FROM : SAO, San Diego

SUBJECT: RUSSIAN ACTIVITIES
INTERNAL SECURITY - R

Reference is made to the Seattle Field Division memorandum to the Bureau dated May 10, 1946, requesting that the Eleventh Naval District Intelligence Officer be contacted for information obtained by that agency as a result of interviews with the Captains of the American ships "EDWIN J. BERWIND" and "ROSS R. FARRINGTON".

There are being forwarded the Bureau herewith two copies of a memorandum dated March 22, 1946, reflecting the result of interviews with the Captain and Officers aboard the SS "WALLACE R. FARRINGTON", and individual copies of the Secret Memorandum are being forwarded to Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles with their respective copies of this communication.

The District Intelligence Office indices fail to reflect any information whatever concerning the American ship "EDWIN J. BERWIND".

Enclosure (2)

WAM:jec

100-3346

cc - Seattle (Enclosure - 1) (100-5838)

cc - San Francisco (Enclosure - 1)

cc - Los Angeles (Enclosure - 1)

EX-31

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MEMORANDUM

22 March 1946

To: District Intelligence Officer, 11ND.

Subj: Vladivostok - Conditions in January 1946 as reported by officers of S. S. ~~WALLACE R. FARRINGTON~~.

1. The following are statements made by Robert B. CAMERON, Captain of the S. S. WALLACE R. FARRINGTON, and by Ensign Robert CAMERON (son of Captain Robert B. CAMERON), 2nd Mate. The S. S. WALLACE R. FARRINGTON is a Liberty Ship, owned by the Burns Steamship Company of 127 W. Anaheim Street, Wilmington, California.
2. The interview was conducted by Lieutenant E. LEIBACHER, USNR, of ZIO-1A, and Agent R. S. WILKINSON of the Terminal Island Intelligence Office, as a result of a lead furnished by William D. RUSSEL, Customs Inspector at San Pedro, California. Inspector RUSSEL stated that Captain CAMERON of the S. S. WALLACE R. FARRINGTON indicated that he would like to inform Naval Intelligence of subject matter.
3. Routing of Ship: The S. S. WALLACE R. FARRINGTON sailed from Long View, Washington 20 December 1945. The ship was routed by ComWesSeaFron to Vladivostok by the Great Circle Route via Unimak Strait, South of Komandorsky Island through the Okhotsk Sea via "unobstructed" Fourth Strait (Onkotan Strait) through La Perouse Strait, then to Valentine Bay and thence with pilots to Vladivostok. The routing order was signed by J. W. ALBERT by direction, and was dated 25 November 1945. The ship arrived at dock #20 at Vladivostok 18 January 1946, and departed again 26 January.
4. Apparently a mistake had been made in routing the ship as indicated above. La Perouse Strait was frozen over, and the ship had to maneuver around Okhotsk Sea for eight days to avoid becoming ice-bound. A detour of some one thousand miles was necessary to avoid becoming ice-bound. Captain CAMERON later learned at Vladivostok that Comdr. ROULLARD, USN, (U. S. Naval Attache), had reported that La Perouse Strait was frozen over, that it froze over about 6 January. Neither Captain CAMERON nor Comdr. ROULLARD could understand why the ship had not been instructed to change its route.
5. After arriving at America Bay the Russian pilots steered a direct course to a point off Askold Island, and from there to Eastern Bosphorus Strait (see H. O. Chart 1780). On the way out the ship went from Eastern Bosphorus Strait through Askold Strait. However, a somewhat irregular course had to be steered to avoid ice flows. The last pilot was dropped again off America Bay.

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LOSING

6. Captain CAMERON states that the H. O. Charts of the approaches to and of the harbor of Vladivostok are accurate and up-to-date; no corrections or additions are suggested. However, there are discrepancies in the Light List. While all lights are located as shown on the H. O. Charts, they are not all as described in the Light List. For example, Light #2480 on Page 199 of "Light List" is given as a white tower - 26 feet. Actually it had a white base with a red cone top, and from a distance it appears as a red tower.
7. The cargo carried to Vladivostok by the S. S. WALLACE R. FARRINGTON consisted mostly of heavy industrial machinery and steel. Some food-stuffs which were originally scheduled to go to a U. S. Navy weather station at Khabarovsk were also carried. The food was to have been unloaded at Vladivostok and was to be forwarded by the U. S. Naval Attache at Vladivostok by rail to the U. S. weather station at Khabarovsk. Since the weather station at Khabarovsk was closed down, the goods were not unloaded and were brought back to San Pedro, California, where they are being unloaded and being turned back to a Navy Supply Depot.
8. While unloading the industrial machinery at Vladivostok and while the ship was being searched for contraband, some of the Russians pilfered part of the goods which originally were destined for the U. S. weather station at Khabarovsk. Among the goods stolen were ten cases of fruit juice, several cases of K rations, and several packages of weather instruments. One box contained a weather instrument, bearing the number R795134. Its Bill of Lading was numbered 12668660, and the Invoice, numbered 32534, was marked "from Supply Office Naval Air Station, Alameda, to Supply Office Naval Air Station, Seattle, Washington".
9. Captain CAMERON had several conferences with Comdr. George D. ROULLARD, USN, Naval Attache at Vladivostok, as well as with Henry T. SMITH, U. S. Vice Consul at Vladivostok.
10. Captain CAMERON was followed, watched, and shadowed all of the time he was ashore at Vladivostok - even while in the company of Comdr. G. D. ROULLARD, U. S. Naval Attache. When entering or leaving the U. S. Consulate, the Russian sentry outside the Consulate would pick up his telephone, presumably to report who had entered or left the Consulate.
11. Captain CAMERON stated that Comdr. ROULLARD is making a very intelligent study of ice and ice conditions in the coastal waters of Siberia, that Comdr. ROULLARD has contacts with ice-breaker captains, and is in good standing with the Russian Admiral in charge of naval operations at Vladivostok. Captain CAMERON expressed the opinion that ROULLARD is a diplomat and a very valuable officer to the U. S. Navy, that he should be kept at Vladivostok, and that his reports and studies are undoubtedly based on diligent and intelligent study.

12. All of the crew of the S. S. WALLACE R. FARRINGTON except eleven were signed on at San Francisco; the eleven were signed on at Long View, Washington, by Customs officials. This resulted in complications at Vladivostok. The Russians did not permit the eleven men to go ashore for the first three days of the stay. All the others were permitted ashore the day following the ship's arrival.
13. When the ship's crew was on liberty ashore, each man or group of men was followed and shadowed. No one was permitted to talk with Russians in the street, nor with anyone else except approved persons it was absolutely necessary to contact in connection with the conduct of business.
14. There was only one restaurant where the Americans were permitted to eat.
15. While approaching Vladivostok, between twenty to twenty-five different submarines were sighted from the S. S. WALLACE R. FARRINGTON. They were all seen between America Bay and Vladivostok proper. These submarines appeared to be unusually heavy in their construction and capable of breaking ice.
16. Pilotage was very satisfactory. The ship had three different pilots on entering Vladivostok harbor, the first one from America Bay to a point off Askold Island where an ice-breaker pilot took over. A docking pilot took the ship in to dock. On leaving three pilots were again employed. All were said by Captain CAMERON to be capable men.
17. No naval activity could be seen at America Bay, probably because the ship was too far out. However, the Captain was told by a Russian pilot (GODSKEY) that there is a Naval Base at America Bay. It is believed by Captain CAMERON to be at "Americana" - see H. O. Chart 1780. According to the Russian pilot (GODSKEY), there is a railroad between Vladivostok and Americana. GODSKEY stated that he lived in Vladivostok and that he traveled between his home and Americana by railroad.
18. ~~Lieutenant~~ GODSKEY, one of the Russian pilots mentioned above, is said by Comdr. ROULLARD, USN, to have been one of the best ice skippers in Russia; that he served several years in a Concentration Camp for being involved in a counter-revolutionary plot, but because of his specialized knowledge and skill he was let out of the Concentration Camp some time during the course of the war and was permitted to serve in the Army or Navy. He became a Lieutenant and apparently distinguished himself in action. He is now a pilot between America Bay and Vladivostok, but is said not to be satisfied with conditions.
19. There was no shipbuilding in evidence at Vladivostok. None of the Americans saw any submarine pens. While pilot GODSKEY had told of a Naval Base at America Bay, he did not mention where the submarines were based.

20. During the entire stay of the S. S. WALLACE R. FARRINGTON at Vladivostok, no airplanes were seen in the air or on the ground; no coastal defense guns were seen.
21. There were a great many persons in uniform in Vladivostok - police, army, navy, and border patrol ("green hats"). The police, army, and navy military police all carried either tommy guns or bayoneted rifles. Officers carried side arms.
22. The Navy and border patrol had excellent equipment and uniforms. The Army personnel appeared to be ill equipped.
23. At Vladivostok the docks were substantial in their construction and in a good state of repair. Most of them were built of concrete. There were many modern and maneuverable cranes, but it appeared that there had been no new construction within the last several years. The railroad equipment was all in a very poor state of repair. Engines, freight and passenger cars, all looked very old, unpainted and in need of repairs.
24. What few automobiles there were were all of American manufacture.
25. The harbor was crowded. Except for the S. S. WALLACE R. FARRINGTON, all ships were believed to have been Russian. Many of the ships were ice-bound and in a bad state of repair. A good many appeared to be laid up for the winter.
26. Both Captain CAMERON and his son stated that conditions in Vladivostok and the treatment accorded American seamen was an "eye-opener" to all.
27. Young CAMERON stated that merchant seamen are "pretty pink as a whole", but that all on this trip who were Communist inclined are cured now. Young CAMERON said he himself had previously been somewhat radical in his thinking, thought Russia was a fine country for the working man, and that our country needed socialization. He was most anxious and appeared very sincere in explaining how he had completely changed in his thinking and that he can never again harbor any thoughts favorable to the Communist form of government. (A check of the subversive files of the Long Beach Police Department reveals no record of either CAMERON.)
28. Young CAMERON said it was a revelation to the radical minded to see how poor the average Russian was, and how they were mistreated by the local police and military. While the people seem to have money, prices are exorbitant. A bottle of beer, for example, costs 75 rubles. The rate of exchange was 5.3 rubles for one U. S. dollar. There appeared to be no discrimination in price. The Americans were believed to have been charged the same as the Russians.
29. The people appeared to have no animosity towards the Americans, but the border patrol ("green hats") was an arrogant lot, and the military and civil officials were also all definitely unfriendly.

30. While in the Intourist Hotel Cabaret, the Americans were not permitted to talk to anyone except to the waiters to give their order. Whenever they tried to talk to anyone, a member of the Russian border patrol (called "green hats") stopped them by showing a tommy gun or bayoneted rifle.

31. Many of the ship's crew told the Captain and 2nd Mate that they will never again serve on a vessel which they know will go to a Russian port. They have reported and complained to their union concerning the treatment accorded them in Vladivostok.

32. Some of the crew told the Captain and mates that they will insist that their union print the truth concerning conditions in Russia and the bad treatment accorded American seamen. They hope to make it difficult for ships to obtain seamen to sail for Russian ports. All of the crew are members of the S.U.P. (Sailors' Union of the Pacific).

33. The following was cited as "facts" which surprised and disgusted the American seamen:

(a) There is a great deal of class distinction. At the theatre the first row is for Consular representatives. The next several rows are for Russian officials. Various other privileged groups follow and finally the workers may sit in the back and in the gallery.

(b) Except for one general store, which has practically nothing to sell, separate stores are maintained for the different classes of people. The dock workers, for example, cannot buy at the store for telegraph workers.

(c) People have to buy through the black market to buy all their necessities. Prices at both the regular and black market are fabulous.

(d) There is no "freedom of religion". There was only one church in use and it was hardly large enough for two hundred people. Its construction was clapboard, and it was dirty. The substantial church buildings were all used as officers' clubs.

(e) Except for the warm goat-skin coats, most of the workers are dressed in rags. The only well dressed women were the wives of seamen who had purchased clothing in America.

(f) Few homes have sanitary plumbing. Most of the water has to be carried in buckets. Public baths are used (infrequently). Public toilets are filthy dirty.

(g) The Russians no longer know how to cook. They eat in public kitchens.

(h) Plain-clothes men and "green hats" are constantly a threat to free speech.

(i) The people are constantly subjected to propaganda. They are lied to about conditions in America. There are many signboards on street corners and on the sides of buildings telling the people how lucky they are to be living in bountiful Russia.

(j) Loudspeakers on street corners blare all day long, and do the thinking for the people.

34. ~~MATUSA~~ (phonetic), a woman interpreter who spoke good English and whose parents left the U.S.A. (Brooklyn) some time in the early 1930s to go to Russia, told young CAMERON that she was not happy with her lot, and that her parents, who gave up a good life in America to help the Communistic cause, were not now well off, nor were they treated properly.

35. Several articles have appeared in Southern California newspapers concerning subject matter.

(a) The following appeared on the front page of Part Two of the Los Angeles Examiner on Monday, 18 March:

"SAILORS ASSAIL SOVIET TACTICS
Charge Ship Followed, Crew Searched,
Trailed on Liberty

"I wish our American Communists could visit the U.S.S.R. and have the experience we had at Vladivostok. I don't think there would be many Reds left in the United States, if they all were treated as the Russians treated us."

"This was the statement of crew members of the Liberty Ship Wallace R. Farrington at Los Angeles Harbor yesterday upon their return from the Siberian port, where they left a cargo of supplies for the Russians.

"UNDER GUARD ----

"The United States merchant sailors were particularly bitter about being treated with suspicion and guarded by soldiers who threatened them with tommyguns.

"The contrast, they said, is striking.

"We have always welcomed Russian sailors to United States ports and given them every freedom, treating them as friends and allies," said Deck Engineer P. B. Cook of Portland, Ore.

"But when we visit one of their ports, bringing them great supplies of scarce American goods, they shove guns in our sides and treat us as enemies," he said.

"SEARCH CREW ----

"When our ship entered the harbor at Vladivostok," said W. M. Hiller, third engineer on the Farrington, "two Russian submarines followed

us. When we docked, Russian soldiers with tommyguns ordered us below decks and stood guard over us for two hours while we were searched for contraband.'

"Hiller told how the 60 crew members of the United States merchant ship were followed by police and armed soldiers wherever they went in Vladivostok, when they were finally issued papers permitting them a brief shore leave.

"The Russian people were afraid to talk to us and when we tried to talk to them, guards forced us to move on, ' he said."

(b) The following appeared on the front page of the San Pedro News-Pilot on Monday, 18 March:

"VLADIVOSTOK LIKE PRISON: SAY SEAMEN

"After "back door" glimpse of Soviet Russia through the port of Vladivostok, crew members aboard the Liberty Ship, W. R. Farrington here today said that "any American 'Red' who visits the USSR," will return "not even a mild pink."

"Indignant over their reception in Russia, the sailors who returned Saturday from a trip to the Siberian port, where they discharged a cargo of supplies, declared Vladivostok reminded them of a concentration camp."

"They told of being held in the ship's mess hall while Russian officials swarmed over the boat on a search. Crew members were not allowed ashore for three days and when passes were "finally granted, each man on liberty was tailed by two or three policemen."

"William Bertelsen, chief engineer, said that only one hotel and two commercial restaurants were available in the city to foreigners and that they were authorized to travel only on three specified streets.

"Bertelsen's assistant, John Hanson, said the men who were "obviously trailing him" were in turn trailed by other men. A large detail of "shadows" accompanied the crew to one dance they were invited to during their stay in the city.

"An American diplomat told Bertelsen that an American communist on another ship protested the continuous surveillance and presented his "communist card" to the authorities. The authorities, the diplomat said, "ripped the card in half." He was "tailed" like any other foreigner.

"The skipper of the ship, Robert CAMERON, told of a visit to a Russian theatre where the front row was reserved for high officials and diplomats; the next rows for naval officers (the navy ranks above the army); the next rows for ordinary sailors and the galleries for army personnel.

"During their entire stay at the Siberian port, their ship was guarded by various members of the military forces, both aboard and on the docks. The military was armed with bayoneted rifles and machine guns. No cameras or binoculars were allowed ashore and crew members were told they could not take Soviet currency either into or out of the country.

"Cameron said that the one church in the city of approximately 500,000 persons was about 40 by 40 feet and that churchgoers constantly were lined up outside waiting admission.

"Vodka sold for \$34 a liter and beer \$6.80 a liter, according to the crew."

36. Transmission by Registered Guard Mail or U. S. Registered Mail is authorized in accordance with Article 76 (15) (e) and (f), U. S. Navy Regulations.

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